

claration of Indulgence gave final toleration to Quakers, Baptists, and Episcopalians, and therewith the *soup de grace* to the Massachusetts' theocracy.

A year or two after its overthrow its restoration was rendered impossible by the provision in the second charter of Massachusetts which bestowed the right of suffrage upon all freeholders of the annual value of forty shillings; but it had still strength to sustain the great thaumaturgic display, so awfully memorable, of the New England witchcraft. As to the immediate authors of this Reign of Terror, we are not prepared to give a positive verdict of conscious criminality; but we think that Mr. Hildreth dismisses too lightly all the evidence which points in this direction. It was doubtless a corollary of the Puritan creed that there was a covenant between the devil and certain unhappy persons which was a sort of parody on the covenant between God and His elect; but it is important to remember the circumstances under which this covenant was insisted on. Up to this date, although witchcraft was made one of the capital offences of Massachusetts on the authority of the text, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," the law against it has been resorted to but sparingly. The enforcement of this law appears to have been difficult, and the circumstances attending it show that, if not a test, it was at all events the occasion of a difference of opinion. In the case of Anne Hibbins, who was Bellingham's sister, it is not to be overlooked, that Bellingham himself was conspicuous for his opposition to his brother magistrates, that he represented the popular principle of "Rotation," that he was *contradictus* in Child's case, and that he was generally averse to intolerant proposals. The deputies who insisted that the old gentlewoman should be hung were notoriously more easily influenced by the ministers than the magistrates, who refused to accept the verdict of guilty; and it may or may not be a fair inference that they promoted her execution to admonish Bellingham himself. In the only other previous convictions for witchcraft we find mentioned, those at Hartford and Charlestown in 1651, the ministers were so officiously forward in the proceeding, that the people of Warwick loudly cried out, "that there were no other witches upon earth, nor devils, but the ministers of New England and such as they." We have already mentioned their attempt, which failed, to discover signs of witchcraft on the persons of the Quaker women; and thus the charge comes to us with a taint of suspicion as a weapon accessible, together with that of heresy, to combat objections to the minister's supremacy.

As we have said, we must remember the peculiar circumstances under which the charge was most vehemently pressed; and it is by no means calculated to remove our suspicions, that the famous and most fatal revival of the delusion was a crisis in which the empire of the ministers was passing away. In the struggle of opinion which was then going forward, a reluctance to believe in witchcraft was a symptom of antipathy to the theocratic system which had hitherto prevailed. As such, it was denounced by the ministers of Boston as "the heresy of the sensual Sadducees," of which it was further said, "how much it has gotten ground in this debauched age is awfully observable; and what a dangerous stroke it gives to settle men in Atheism is not hard to discern." An agitation on the subject was zealously fanned which was calculated—and we only stop short of saying, which was consciously designed—to give encouragement to imposture. The following circumstances, at all events, have to be reconciled with a belief in the ingenuousness of its chief promoter, Cotton Mather. He had taken a bewitched girl to his house to experiment on her symptoms, and obtained results which he published. As a specimen of these, he found that the bewitched could comfortably endure a Popish book, and not only read the book of Common Prayer, but took delight in it, while she was distressed beyond measure by "a precious little treatise," the work of the Rev. Mr. Willard, of Boston. Certain other books which were published by Mather's father and grandfather, were so antipathetic that one of them stunned the girl, while "my grandfather Cotton's Milk for Babes," or the Assembly's Catechism, would bring on hideous convulsions. Cotton Mather incidentally availed himself of Satan's testimony to the value of the remaining copies. "I hope," he said, "I have not spoiled the credit of the books by telling how much the devil hated them." In the case of Goodwin's children, Mather ascertained that they were permitted by the devil to enjoy both the writings and meetings of the Quakers. On the other hand his bewitched protégé flattered him by declaring that the demons could not enter his study; or be permitted to do him mischief. We can understand that at this point his vanity conspired with his personal credit to induce him to regard "the denial of devils or witches" as an insult to himself, but his credit for sincerity can only be sustained on the assumption that he had less than ordinary penetration. In addition to these, there are other circumstances which ought not to be lost sight of. Mr. Bancroft has laid marked and well-deserved emphasis on the previous eagerness of Mather and his coadjutors for some manifestation on a grand scale. When his father obtained the nomination of the first officers under the second charter of Massachusetts, and appointed "friends to the interest of the churches," the son broke out with irrepressible exultation. "The time for favor is come; yea, the set time is come. Instead of my being made a sacrifice to wicked rulers, my father-in-law, with several related to me, and several brethren of my own church, are among the council. The governor of the province is not my enemy, but one whom I baptised; and one of my dearest friends." In his own prayers for some awakening sign, we see the temper which is apt to realise its aspirations. "I obtained," said he, "of the Lord that he would use me to be a herald of his Kingdom now approaching." In what sense he believed he had obtained this it is hard to say; for we have no commission to read the secrets of the heart; but the

anticipation of a work of unusual nature, coupled with the means by which a tragedy of like import was sedulously prepared, will always afford grounds to some to say it was consciously premeditated.

We turn from this sanguinary mystery, which we are unable to fathom, to the broad conclusion on which we rest firmly. The irradicable stain of a grievous tyranny rests on the memory of the founders of New England, and slurs and tarnishes their entire reputation. Every one is familiar with their nobler characteristics. They were staunch and sober, manly, self-sustaining; an arduous task devolved upon them, and they had the courage and capacity to execute it; they have approached beside the fountains of American history; but their neater aspect is odious. We are not solicitous to remark their English lineaments; but even the system they established might have had place in England, if the saints in this country had consolidated their triumph. The interest of their example to us consists in this—that what the "Little" or "Bare-bones" Parliament only aspired after, they attained with certain minor modifications. In their native island they were thrust back within the bounds of authority. But on the shores of New England they were fairly emancipated. Fortunately or advisedly, all restraint was withdrawn, and they had liberty to do that which was right in their own eyes. Here then, to use the image of Jeremy Taylor, the tender stomachs which could not endure milk, accommodated themselves to the digestion of iron. In a colony which the mass of men carelessly regard as founded in vindication of liberty of conscience, all its exponents would have suffered successively. Had Bunyan opened his conventicle in Boston, he would have been banished if not whipped; had Lord Baltimore appeared there, he would have been liable to perpetual imprisonment. If Penn had escaped with either of his ears the more pertinacious Fox would, doubtless, have ended by mounting the gallows with Marmaduke Stephenson or William Leddra. Yet the authors of these extremities would have had no admissible pretext. They were not instigated by the dread of similar persecution or by the impulse to retaliate. There was no hierarchy to invite them to the plains of Armageddon; there was no Agag to hew in pieces, or kings and nobles to bind with links of iron. They persecuted spontaneously, deliberately, and securely. Or rather, it might be said, they were cruel under difficulties. They trod grapes of their winepress in a city of refuge, and converted their Zion into a house of Egyptian bondage; and in this respect we conceive they are without a parallel in history.

It has been urged, as it is invariably urged in similar cases, that the temper of their age may excuse them; but in this instance the plea is inadmissible. Neither the temper nor the practice of the age in the mother country, to which comparison is directed, can be cited for an equivalent. The excitement of a bloody contest; the exasperation of rival parties with the reprisals exacted in the hour of their alternate success, offer no parallel to the trophies of a placid legislation, working remote from such disturbing influences. From the confusion of ancient interests, and the fierce resentments which their conflict bequeathed, we can deduce no apology for a system contrived in the wilderness in contemplation of permanence, and under the auspices of peace. If the temper of the age is to influence our judgments, it should be the temper displayed under parallel circumstances by men who had like zeal and like opportunities. If we turn to the Code of Catholic Maryland, framed at a time when the exclusive system of the New England States was pressed with its extreme rigor, on the same shores, in a neighboring province, the temper of the age admits this illustration. "Whereas," says the most celebrated provision of this Code, "the enforcing of the conscience in matters of religion hath frequently fallen out to have been of dangerous consequence in those commonwealths where it has been practised, and for the more quiet and peaceable government of this province, and the better to preserve mutual love and amity among the inhabitants, no person of this province professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall be in any ways troubled, molested, or discountenanced for his or her religion, or in the free exercise thereof." In accordance with this provision, the Governors of Maryland took the following oath: "I will not by myself, or any other, directly or indirectly, molest any person professing to believe in Jesus Christ, for or in respect of religion." The "Great Law" of Pennsylvania also secured toleration to "all persons who confess and acknowledge the Almighty and Eternal God to be the Creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society." It is true that this latter law was not promulgated till the Massachusetts theocracy was tottering to its downfall; but from 1649 to 1682, the respective dates of the two enactments referred to, the rulers of Massachusetts received various admonitions, conceived in the same spirit; and if they advisedly rejected them, all, neither imitating Lord Baltimore, nor anticipating Penn, it is vain to urge in their behalf the temper of an age of which, as regards its contiguous manifestations, they stupidly repudiated the most impressive characteristics.

It has been further attempted to be argued that they are not amenable to historic censure because they regarded themselves in the light of a private association whose function was to constitute a Church and not a State—a view which can only be presented in disregard of numerous facts, and through the confusion which is commonly made between an explanation and an excuse. The rulers of Massachusetts were aware that they were founding a State, though they made the limits of their Church commensurate with its boundaries; they could not claim the license of a private association when they exercised some of the highest functions of government; the confusion of their ideas, exaggerate it as we may, can in no sense atone for the cruelty of their acts. On the other hand, had they been invested with sovereign prerogatives, though no tribunal could have called their acts in question, the absence of a remedy would not have excused the perversion of their sovereignty to tyrannical uses; but it is vain to combat theories, which others may impute to them, but which obviously could not have been their own view of their predicament. They were not a private body, they were not a sovereign state; they were to all intents a subordinate government deriving; and this they practically understood, every tittle of their authority from a charter of the English Crown. The equivocation with which they covered their withdrawal from England; their subsequent concealment of their proceedings, their embassies, and professions to the mother country, substantially show that they were aware of their po-

sition. If we allow for some misconception where their Charter was silent, they knew, at all events, their positive obligations. Men who set such store by their "Patent," had scrutinised closely the terms in which its privileges were conferred. Yet, under an instrument which provided that all inhabitants of their province should have and enjoy "all the liberties and immunities" of free-born Englishmen, they established a more compact and dreary tyranny than Englishmen elsewhere ever endured or sanctioned.

THE ENGLISH ASSIZES.

(From the Nation)

"The winter assizes are proceeding"—we copy the language of an English Journal—"and Heavens! what a picture of crimes and ignorance of sin and sorrow and suffering, do their records present! To such a picture no condemnation can do justice; the language of Divine inspiration alone can describe it—it is 'the abomination of desolation.'" It is not in any spirit save that of shame for common humanity disgraced to so awful an extent, that we approach the subject which has elicited from even an English journal, such comment as this. Nor for the unchristian-like purpose of parading the bloody calendar of the English Assizes before our readers, accompanied by the natural remark that the journals of that country sedulously magnify and gloat over every instance of Irish crime; rarely recording an item of Irish news save the chronicle of some real or fabulous outrage, in order that their readers might associate inseparably Irish intelligence with violence and depravity. Could we be so far led away by resentment of conduct so savage and atrocious as to descend to retaliation, a fearful and a just one is, here supplied. A fearful and a just one; for the mind absolutely sickens at a survey of "this Red Sea of blood"—as the journal we have quoted, calls it—this picture of a pandemonium, revealed to us by a glance at the proceedings in the English Assize Courts. Crimes which the mind can have no conceptions of. Crimes which the English language has no name for which would be understood unless in England. Crimes which to name to the guiltiest wretch that ever stood on an Irish scaffold would cause in his—even his—breast a shudder of horror.

The son stands at the bar, charged with attempt to poison his aged father; that father turns round and, in open court, points out as his would be murderer, his own child! The mother, the sisters, and the brother are seen led forward in hysterics to accuse the son—the brother—to trace to him the awful crime. Wife murder, child murder, parricide, fratricide, thrust themselves on us at every name on the list. Robert Haydock convicted of the murder of his wife Philippa. They slept together the night of the murder, and he brought into bed with him a blacksmith's large sledge hammer, with which he beat out her brains! Robert Tucker assails his wife with a carving knife; Jonathan Heywood found guilty at Rochdale of the murder of Martha Jones. He went to bed with her over night, and cut off her head in the morning! Thus curly the English journals detail the results of the various assizes. Why should we wade through this "red sea of blood"? What need to shock our readers with a transcript of the hideous diary? God knows it is with reluctance and disgust we touch it at all, for it reeks at every page. Let no reader, exasperated by the language of the English journals on the subject of Irish crime, be so much of the savage as little of the man; as not to blush at this blot upon our common humanity, merely because it has been perpetrated in England. These English assizes disgrace human nature—were the crimes less dark, less numerous, we might stop to applet them, or trace them to their sources; but they are of a nature and extent to sweep away all international barriers, and to make us forget everything save the painful, saddening, humiliating fact that men—brothers of Adam's race—be their colour white or black—be their country Albion or Liberia—have fallen thus low, and disgraced the common fellowship of man.

It is idle to suppose that when crime stalks abroad and riots thus in a country where the arts have a home, and where science is fostered and encouraged, that we can boast of civilization, when its first aim and material end is not achieved. To say that such crimes are unknown amongst the barbarous nations of the present day, would not be the fact—some as bad, though none so various, numerous, and heinous, are to be found, we doubt not, in some other part of the globe—in Patagonia or Kafiraria. But in these places the light of Christianity has not shone, the beams of civilization have never pierced the dark cloud of ignorance which pals the understanding. History supplies us with no instance of a country where either of these influences prevailed, yet where society was in such an abnormal condition, Pagan, but civilised, Greece and Rome exhibit no such depravity—uncivilised but Christianised Peru and Mexico, in the days of the Jesuit Fathers, did not afford, in the space of many years, one crime as heinous as the least of these on the English calendar. Must we face the startling query—do the vices of civilisation outweigh its benefits? England at this moment suggests that problem to the philanthropist. Is this the civilisation for which we are told Europe is now being deluged with blood? Is this the civilisation which it is the crime of Russia not only not to possess but to abhor? Where in all Russia, from Tobolsk to Chersonese, can crimes like these be found? Who would not prefer the rude virtue of the savage Cossack, or the ignorance of a simple Armenian, to the vaunted civilisation of the West. We question if all the crimes committed in Russia, from the days of Peter the Great to those of Alexander II, would amount to a tithe of the enormity disclosed at this "bloody assize" in England to-day.

Among the recent files of English papers are some interesting statistics relative to the agriculture of England and France, from which it appears that in England, out of 50,000,000 acres cultivated, 10,000,000 were sown with wheat or other cereals; while in France 50,000,000 are cultivated for the latter purpose. The average growth of wheat per acre in England is four quarters or thirty-two bushels; in France one and three-fifths or nearly thirteen bushels. The produce of English land is about £3 4s; that of France about £1 12s. per acre. The number of sheep is about the same in both countries, viz. 35,000,000, and the wool produced about 60,000 tons; but owing to the difference in the average, there is something less than one and a-half sheep per acre in England, and only about one-third of a sheep per acre in France. In France 4,000,000 of cattle are slaughtered annually, the average weight being 250 pounds; in England there is not half that number slaughtered, but their average weight is about 600 pounds.

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

Father Petcherine preached on Sunday last at the Redemptorist chapel, in his peculiar style of simple earnest eloquence. He exulted in the triumph of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and he achieved by the result of his late trial in Dublin, and he was there to perform a duty—first, to the Ever Blessed Mother of God, as the victory was won through her all-powerful intercession, on her greatest festival, that of her Immaculate Conception. The triumph had been gained; and how could he express the feelings of his heart, of his gratitude for every prayer that had been offered—for every aspiration breathed for him by rich and poor, old and young, and for the deep anxiety all alike felt on his behalf? He loved to repeat the words of the eloquent and energetic man—who had pleaded his cause, that there was still "manly faith and stainless purity amidst the green hills of holy Ireland!" In conclusion, the Rev. gentleman said that the greatest insult thrown out to him on the trial by the crown prosecutors was to be told that he (Father Petcherine) was a foreigner; but as the ivy-mantled old abbey walls and clung to its ruins, so did his heart cling fondly and closely to Ireland and her ancient faith, and next to his love for Almighty God and His Blessed Mother did he love the Irish people.—*Limerick Chronicle*.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.—The Christian Brothers are about to open two more of their invaluable educational institutions—one in Kingstown, near Judge Crampton, and another in Milltown, county Kerry, where the teaching of the Brothers will diffuse the blessings elsewhere experienced. We have heard that another of their admirable schools will shortly be established in the same direction, perhaps at Kiltorglen, a neighboring town.—*Munster News*.

THE LAND REVOLUTION IN IRELAND.—The Irish Encumbered Estates Commission is now in its seventh year of office, and it will not be uninteresting to those who have watched the working of that remarkable tribunal to give an example of the complete revolution it has effected, or rather is effecting, in the agricultural and social condition of Ireland. The counties of Galway and Mayo contain 2,800,000 acres of land, or about one-seventh of the area of the island. In 1850 the landed proprietary of these two counties were perhaps the most hopelessly involved in Ireland. The solvent exceptions were few, chiefly in the eastern portion, where some estates were comparatively free from encumbrance, well cultured, and comfortably tenanted; while the remoter districts, including the great lakes and highlands of the far west, exhibited little more than the primitive elements of agriculture—the land untouched by enterprise, unimproved by capital, and even its natural resources unnoted, except by the casual glance of tourists in search of the picturesque. Now, on every side are unmistakable signs of improvement and progress. Many estates are being furnished with well-constructed farmsteads, drainage is becoming general, a higher style of farming is adopted, and the wages of labor are more than doubled within the last five years. 636,000 acres—i. e., about one-fourth of the available superficies of these two counties, have already changed hands, producing a total sum of upwards of £2,000,000, and petitions for sale are still pouring in unceasingly. The number of proprietors over the extent sold has been increased fourfold, and about one-third are purchasers at and under £2,000.

There never was a plainer policy preached than that of Independent Opposition. The dullest man can understand it. It is simply to send into parliament a body of honest men pledged to stand together, and use their power for no other object but the good of Ireland. Thirty or forty men so acting could get anything at all in reason that they might demand.—No government could stand that would refuse compliance. Every body who knows anything of the British parliament knows this. It is evident to the meanest capacity. In point of fact, the party of Independent Opposition formed in 1852, were not a month in the house when they had overtures from both of the English factions for their support, and had that party acted honestly Sharnan Crawford's bill would be the law of the land before the end of 1853. Well, they were not honest, some such as Keogh, Sadleir, the Scullys, &c., went in for the purpose of selling the country; others might not have been so deliberately false and wicked, but one by one they all fell away until out of the fifty men returned to support the policy of Independent Opposition, scarcely half a dozen remain true to their pledges. The remedy for this evil is plain enough, support the men who have kept faith with the people, and reject the renegades. Had the first traitors been punished as they deserved, many who have since fallen away would doubtless remain true, but when Keogh was returned for Athlone, and Sadleir for Sligo, all fear of popular vengeance vanished, and the knaves appeared day by day in their true colours.—*Wexford People*.

It will be satisfactory to the public to know that at the quarter sessions, which commenced here on Thursday, the chairman, the Hon. John Plunket, Q. C., addressed the grand jury in very strong terms of congratulation upon the peaceable state of the county, and said it was a very remarkable fact that the county Meath should be in a state of such profound tranquillity after passing through a contested election. There was not a single case of assault—not a breach of the peace upon the calendar, and the entire crown business was over in half an hour. Such a state of things as this is without a parallel in a great county like Meath—not a single case of violence or riot after such a contest.

An accident of a very melancholy character occurred on Sunday last, at the famous cliffs of Kilkee, on the western coast of Clare. The sea was running mountains high, and dashing with great fury against the base and sides of the cliffs, on the brow of which a party of ladies and gentlemen had collected to enjoy the grandeur of the scene. Two of the party, a Mr. Pepper and Miss Smithwick, both, it was stated, from Tipperary, rashly ventured down the side of the cliffs to a place well known to tourists as the amphitheatre, and while endeavouring to approach the "puffing hole," through which columns of water rose every moment, high into the air, they were swept from a ledge of rock, and immediately engulfed in the boiling surges. They vanished in a moment from the sight of their companions, and were carried into the ocean, their bodies not having since been discovered. It was said that the unhappy pair were to have been married immediately after the Christmas holidays, and that the gentleman had attained the rank of colonel in the East India Company's service.